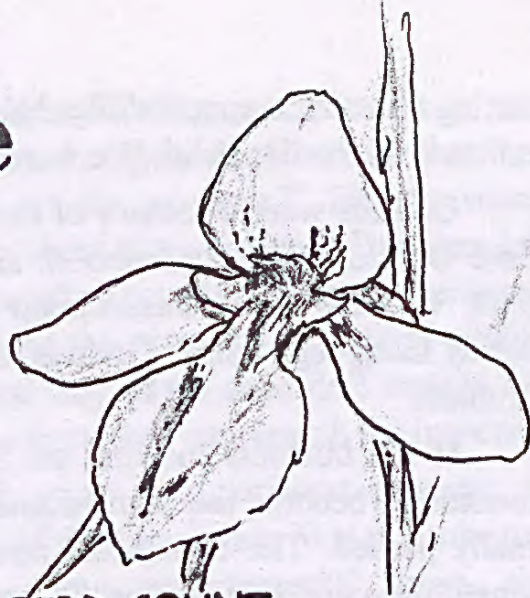


Castlemaine Naturalist November 2003 Vol. 27.10 # 305



BOCA CHALLENGE BIRD COUNT

Saturday December 6, 2002

WANTED 10 - 12 observers (minimum number needed to cover the area thoroughly). You won't have to be an expert birdo - each group will have a qualified leader, but you must be able to count to more than 10 !!!!!

OBJECTIVE To count not only the species of birds, but the actual numbers within a 40 km radius of Castlemaine.

MEET at the Octopus opposite Castle Motel in Duke St.

TIME 8.15 am for a 8.30 am start for morning or all day trips.

All-dayers - bring snacks, lunch and drinks, etc.

Meet 12.45pm for afternoon only - bring afternoon tea.

Lunch break between the two half day trips - 12.15 to 1pm at the

Octopus.

RETURN All groups to return to the Octopus by 5.30pm SHARP to finalise collation and completion of the survey.

It is VITAL to ADVISE US BY WED. DEC 3. if you are able to take part so that we can be organised for the day.

Ken and Maureen Dredge 5470 6474

These Bird Challenges are always hard work, but great fun, too. Ed

P.S. Last year's team had a count of 124 species

VFNCA Campout at Cape Bridgewater Oct. 10-12.

I was the only Castlemaine member at the camp, but I soon found myself among friends, and I enjoyed this camp very much as the emphasis was on the natural history of the area.

It would be difficult to pick one highlight, as there were many, but I did enjoy the trip out to Point Danger and the Gannet rookery. The island off the Point has been a rookery for ever, but 7 years ago a few young birds decided to nest on the mainland. They weren't successful to start with, as foxes, people and very canny ravens all took their toll. However, now these first timers are experienced birds, and there is something like 100 pairs now

nesting there, and successfully, helped admittedly by the fence that has been built across the headland. We were privileged to be let into the fenced area.

Orchids were a feature of the outings too, and my first-ers were the Hare Orchid, Leafy Greenhood, and Limestone Spider Orchid, a very rare plant. We also saw a small clump of Swamp Diurus, another rarity, several Daddy Long-legs Spider Orchids, and masses of Pink Fairies and Wallflower Orchids.

At the business meeting on Saturday afternoon after the outings, the decision to become the South Eastern Australian Naturalists Association was finally passed. The committee now has the job of putting together a new constitution and transferring finances to the new association. The reason for this move is twofold. Too often VFNCA, the association of clubs, was confused with FNCV, Field Naturalists Club of Victoria, just one club in the association, based in Melbourne, but having a much wider membership.

The next Campout will be on the March long weekend in 2004 at "Kangaroobi" and run by the Timboon club.

The ANN camp will be in Perth next spring from Sept. 22 to Oct. 8 including pre-and post camp tours. The main camp is from 22/9 - 8/10/04. Already the campsite has been booked out for accommodation, but tent and caravan sites are still available at the last notice. The nominated Park is the Perth International Tourist Park, 186 Hale Road Forest Field, W.A., 6058.

Rita Mills

Wildlife and Biodiversity Issues of Western Victoria

Speaker, Barry Clugston

Barry Clugston comes with a diverse range of qualifications that have led to his close association with environmental matters. His experience as the chairman of Grampians Water, as a farmer, a former Chairman of Vic. Landcare Council, a Land for Wildlife Officer and particularly as a fortnightly contributor on ABC Radio has placed him in a good position to argue the case for the environment. Once, having observed 500 protesting farmers in Melbourne, he thought they had lost the plot. Since then, as a Land for Wildlife Officer making many farm visits, he has realised that farmers are some of the greatest conservationists of all time - out in the environment each day observing plants, weather patterns etc.

He is concerned, however, that a change in attitude with a groundswell of antagonism towards environmental issues might be taking place now that could see valuable advances lost as a result. This change has been driven by the recent fires in the NE. Accusations concerning management issues and why people want to live in remote areas are being used to fuel conservative views, when the only thing that could have stopped such a fire was two inches of rain!

Barry talked about how great it is when a Red Flying Fox turns up in an

area where it was previously unknown; about finding microbats in an old coat or in a tractor exhaust; and about Long-billed Corellas that are destructive but then asked, "Who shot all the goannas?" He expressed concern at the fact that there might be only three Grey-crowned Babblers left in the whole of the Wimmera. He talked briefly about the effect of increased numbers of predators which in turn increase the pressure on native wildlife and commented that farmers with neat and tidy farms shouldn't expect to have Curlews (which like long vegetation where they can search for insects).

Barry sees the Green Paper, aimed at an amalgamation process, as having some good options. As Chairman of the Grampians Water Authority he applauds the move to think more about environmental flows, the degraded state of streams (both regulated and unregulated), rebates and higher water prices etc. The need to look at all the players and the role they play in the big issues such as salinization, pollution and supply, is the sensible approach. "WE SHOULD BE RESPONSIBLE FOR OUR ACTIONS " and "GET INVOLVED – THE MORE PEOPLE INVOLVED THE BETTER"

During question time Barry spoke about plans to enclose the Wimmera channelling system which presently involves 17,000km of open channels between Dadswells Bridge and Ouyen and 16,000 open farm dams. He also supported the idea put forward that plumbers be paid by shires to fix dripping taps and leakages that are responsible for a great deal of water wastage. In the meantime we can all GET INVOLVED by starting at home and making sure our taps are in good operating condition!

Geraldine Harris

Excursion, Sat. Oct. 11.

Due to illness the trip to Mandurang had to be cancelled, but Richard Piesse volunteered to take an excursion to Morgan's Track and the Monk as the Wednesday Evening Walk there was cancelled due to rain. By all accounts Morgan's Track didn't have its usual wealth of flowers, but the orchids on the Monk made up for that

Here is Penny Garnett's list for the afternoon:

Morgans Track

Cats' Claws *Grevillea alpina*
 Pink Bells *Tetralochea ciliata*
 Gold Dust Wattle *Acacia acinacea*
 Waxlip Orchid *Glossodia major*
 Handsome Flat Pea
Platylobium formosum
 Sweet Marianth
Rhytidosperrum procumbens
 Slender Riceflower *Pimelea linifolia*
 Fairy Waxflower
Philothea verrucosa

Tall Sundew
Drosera peltata ssp auriculata
 Common Billy Buttons
Craspedia variabilis
 Creamy Candles
Stackhousia monogyna
 Pink Fingers *Caledonia catenata*
 Leopard Orchid *Diurus pardina*
 Sticky (Golden) Everlasting
Bractyantha bracteatum
 Yam Daisy *Microceris sp. 3*

The Monk - many of the above, plus -

Bulbine Lily *Bulbine bulbosa*
Chocolate Lily *Dichopogon strictus*
Crimson Spider Orchid

Greencomb Spider Orchid
Arachnorchis sp. *
Primrose Goodness *G. blacken*

Arachnorchis concolor

* Both the Mantis Greencomb *A. tenticulata* and Brown Clubbed Spider Orchid *A. phaeoclava* are found on the Monk.

Wednesday Evening Wildflower Walk (3)

This one didn't happen because it was raining, which was both nice and disappointing at the same time.

Wednesday Evening Wildflower Walk (4) - 8/9/03

Leader, Geraldine Harris

(Note. To save space only common names are given when the plant has already been recorded in an earlier Wed. Evening walk. Ed.)

The highlights of this walk to the corner of Youngman's and Reilly's Tracks in the Wattleflat bush at Barkers Creek was, for me (apart from the carpets of Waxlip and Pink Finger/Dusky Finger Orchids) seeing a rare *Grevillea* in flower and a common plant I've never seen before.

Grevillea dryophylla Goldfields *Grevillea*, is a holly-leaved small shrub endemic to the Bendigo-St Arnaud-Maryborough-Castlemaine region. This it is rare in Victoria. Near Castlemaine it occurs (occasionally) at Barkers Creek-Wattleflat, at Rise and Shine near Sandon, and further north towards Bendigo. I don't remember seeing its bronze-green flowers before.

Millotia tenuifolia Soft *Millotia*, is a tiny erect annual in the daisy family, common in the Castlemaine district, especially to the west and south. Only a couple of inches high, it is grey and hairy, with linear leaves and pale yellow, rayless flower heads.

Plants in flower included: Dusky Fingers, Gold-dust Wattle, Waxlip Orchid, Yam Daisy, White Marianth, Goldfields *Grevillea G. dryophylla*, Creamy Candles *Stackhousia monogyna*, Soft *Millotia M. tenuifolia*, Leopard Orchid, Early Nancy, Purplish Beard Orchid *Calochilus robertsonii* (these plants were only approx. ¼ their normal size. Ed.), Club Sedge probably *Isolepis* sp., Tall Sundew (Erinallum) *Drosera peltata* ssp *auriculata*, Pink Fingers, *Capeweed *Arctotheca calendula*, Blunt Greenhood *Pterostylus curta*, Pink Bells, Billy Buttons *Craspedia variabilis*.

Margaret Panter

Apologies to the people we lost on the way. Some ideas people have suggested for avoiding this problem on future evening wildflower walks (which are a challenge to lead because of the large number of cars going through to town when traffic is busy - and we have a number of visitors, who are not familiar with Field Nat procedures, with us) are:

- Do not proceed through the built up area in convoy. Nominate a well

known spot on the way to meet up.

- The leader needs to know how many cars are in the convoy.
- Let all drivers know exactly where we're going and by what route. (Penny's slip of paper with instructions for how to get to the walk area in Taradale the next week was very helpful.)
- Explain how to keep a convoy together by keeping an eye on the person behind you, dropping back if they fall behind, and stopping if they stop. If everyone in the convoy does this the whole convoy will stop if one car stops.
- If some do get lost, those with mobile phones should have them switched on so the divided parties contact each other.

Margaret Panter and Rita Mills

Wednesday Evening Wildflower Walks (5) 15/10/03

Leader Penny Garnett

Again we had a good crowd at the walk, including a number of visitors. Penny led us out to the end of Back Road at Taradale, and we walked along the railway reserve to a small wildflower reserve along the line. Again one car load got left behind at Chewton, but thanks to Penny's instructions over the phone they arrived safely.

The evening was ideal, and the flowers, much later than in Castlemaine, were everywhere. We saw the best show of Fairy Wax that we'd seen for the season. A special surprise was the discovery of the Plain-lip Spider Orchid, *Arachnorchis clavigera*. It is recorded for the district only in Metcalfe Bushland Reserve.

My record of plants in flower were: Common Riceflower *Pimelea humilis*, Slender Riceflower, Pink Bells, Gold-dust Wattle, Silver Wattle *Acacia dealbata*, Blackwood *A. melanoxylon*, Hedge Wattle *A. paradoxa*, Rough Wattle, Fairy Wax, Common Beard-heath, Creamy Candles, Early Nancy, Cats Claws, Longleaf, or Hop, Bitter Pea *Daviesia latifolia*, Billy Buttons, ?Golden Buttons *Craspedia chrysantha* according to Willis, Plain-lip Spider Orchid *Arachnorchis clavigera*, White Marianth, Primrose Goodenia *G. blackiana*, Waxlip Orchid, Leopard Orchid, Nodding Greenhood, Purple Coral Pea - including a pink specimen, which is quite unusual in the local form, Erinallum or Tall Sundew, Running Postman *Kennedia procumbens* (some really good specimens), Buttercup sp., and Common Woodrush - and 3 species of *Vetch.

Rita Mills

Wildflower Wander, 22 Oct. '03

Under the command of Stuart Morris, who had clearly made several recces of the theatre to be engaged, we advanced from the Octopus in single file at about 1607 hours, and arrived at the target area, Smith's Reef Track, at about 1630 hours, after some hesitation on the part of a one vehicle splinter group which had been considering a right-flanking pincer movement down

Gowar Road.

We stopped twice, once at the beginning of the track, and again about 2 km. down it. There was more to see the second time, maybe. There were lots of flowers though a lack of sun prevented some from opening, and clearly many more are still to come. Perhaps the best sight was of a purple and a white Bearded Orchid standing side by side. It was interesting to see a species of Mat Rush (*L. filiformis*) that is the host plant of the larvae of a scarce Skipper butterfly found in this area.

An interesting hour or so was spent in this lovely woodland, the occasional cry of discovery causing the accompanying experts (Rita and Geraldine) to dash hither and thither identifying the flower for the eagle-eyed spotters who stood pointing at their find.

We beat a retreat at about 1745 hours, passing as we left two lady sentries standing at attention over a, 'til then, unnoticed Bearded Orchid at the side of the road where we had first stopped. It had been a good afternoon. Many thanks to the C.O. Tony Morton

Rita Mills' plant list for the afternoon - Chocolate lilies, Waxlip Orchids, Daphne Heath *Brachyloma daphnoides*, Cats Claws, Golden Everlastings, Slender Riceflower, Many-flowered Matrush *Lomandra multiflora*, Slender Riceflower, Common Beard Heath, Milkmaids *Burchardia umbellata*, Showy Parrot-pea *Dillwynia sericea*, Rabbits Ears *Thelymitra antenifera*, Hooded Caledenia *C. cuculata*, Musky Caledenia *C. gracilis*, Bulbine Lily *B. bulbosa*, Tangled Guinea-flower *Hibbertia exuciates*, Gold-dust Wattle, Pink Fingers *Caledenia carnea* var. *carnea*, Scented Sunorchid *Thelymitra megalyptra*, Creamy Candles, White Marianth, Tall Sundew, Purplish Beard Orchid *Calochilus robertsonii*, including two white specimens.

Observations

- Penny Garnett brought along a branch of *Acacia cardiophylla* which was infested by Globular Wattle Scale *Cryptes baccatus*. The main branch was almost covered in small round crayfish-pot shaped 'scales'.
- Debbie Worland sighted three groups of White-browed Babblers with a few roosting sites on a recent trip to Cornishtown at the back of Fryerstown.
- Richard Piesse walking with the Newstead Walking Group discovered another location for Rosy Baeckea *Baeckea ramosissima* on the Vaughan/Drummond Rd, just before Middletons Creek.
- Two Varied Sitellas were sighted beginning to build a nest in a standing dead tree near Fryerstown, almost opposite the Duke of Cornwall Mine. Margaret Badminton
- Geoff Harris on an early morning walk surprised a group of kangaroos gathered on a nearby hill. They hopped away leaving behind a medium sized male lying on the ground which, to Geoff's amazement, let his front paw drop slowly back and died. The animal didn't appear to have any external injuries.

- Greencomb Spider Orchids *Arachnorchis ?dilatata*, Pink Fingers *Petalochilus carneus*, Bulbine Lilies *Bulbine bulbosa* and Yam Daisies *Microseris sp.3*, are scattered among great sweeps of Wax-lip Orchids *Glossodia major* at Barkers Creek. Chocolate Lilies *Arthropodium strictum* are just starting to flower. Geraldine Harris
- The wattle found on Mopoke Gully Road at Yapeen during a U3A walk on 22/10 proved to be Streaked Wattle *Acacia lineata*. It's most eastern record was Inglewood. Rita Mills
- Richard Piesse reports that there is a Brown Falcon back in his gully south of Vaughan for the first time in years - much to the consternation of the other birds. He also has a wonderful show of Running Postman *Kennedia prostrata*, along his driveway. Also, the Sticky Boronia at Irishtown is at its best at the moment (end of October).
- Margaret Badminton and Debbie Worland spotted a Brush Bronzewing on the side of the road on the Irishtown side of Fryerstown.
- On another occasion Margaret was at her block at Muckleford behind the Caslemaine Golf Club when she heard what she thought was the loud, high pitched yelping of a "small yappy dog" which had been hit by a car, only, as she hurried towards the road to see if she could do anything to help, a Little Eagle landed on the branch of a tree close by still making the cry. Another one was overhead. She is wondering if anyone else has heard this cry, and is it a mating call?
- Peggy Munro's Buff-banded Rail family has raised another family, this time of three chicks, in her garden. Says something for designer weeds?

Birdlist for Cornishtown 5.10.03 (9am- 11am)

Flame Robin, Welcome Swallow, Striated Pardalote, White-winged Chough, Crimson Rosella, Eastern Rosella, Whistling Kite, Rufous Whistler, White-browed Babbler, Yellow Robin, Mistletoe Bird, Yellow-tufted, Yellow-faced and White-naped Honeyeaters, Grey Fantail, Grey Shrike-thrush, Superb Fairy Wren, Brown, and White-throated Treecreeper, Restless Flycatcher, Richard's Pipit, Long-billed Corella, Magpie, Raven sp., Blackbird, Galah, Red-browed Finch, Common Bronzewing, Crested Pigeon, Red Wattlebird, Red-rumped Parrot.

Debbie Worland

FROM THE BUSINESS MEETING

7 or 8 people carried out the **planting** at the Gardens.

We have signed a contract with the VFF and are now insured with them for public liability **insurance** and voluntary workers cover.

Richard Piesse hopes to find an old coach road suitable for a walk for the **Heritage Festival** in May 2004 as the FNC contribution to the festival.

Welcome to new member Anthea Mately of Faraday.

The Leanganook section of the Great Dividing Trail is to be officially opened in Bendigo on Friday Nov. 21 at 11 am.

Castlemaine Field Naturalists Programme - November, 2003.

General meetings are held in the Uniting Church (UCA) hall (enter from Lyttleton St.) at 8.00 pm on the second Friday of each month, except January.

Excursions are usually on the Saturday following the general meeting, and leave promptly at the times stated from The Octopus, opposite Castle Motel, Duke Street. Outdoor excursions are likely to be cancelled in extreme weather conditions. There are NO excursions on total fire ban days.

Business meetings are held at 27 Doveton Street on the 4th Thursday of each month, except December, at 7.30 pm. All members are invited to attend.

VISITORS ARE WELCOME AT CLUB MEETINGS AND EXCURSIONS

Fri. Nov. 14. *Natural History, Outback.* Trevor Blake. UCA hall, 8pm.

Sat. Nov. 15. *Bendigo Sewerage Ponds.* Leader: Chris Morris. Leave the Octopus at 1.30 sharp.

Sat. Dec. 6. *BOCA Bird Challenge.* Leaders: Ken and Maureen Dredge. Meet at the Octopus opposite the Motel at 8.15am for an 8.30 start.

Fri. Dec. 12. *Members and Visitors Night.* Your chance to share a few slides a talk, a book review, some special observations from your travels etc. Newhavers, especially - don't forget!! UCA hall. 8.30pm

Sat. Dec. 13 *Wombat Reservoir, south of Daylesford.* Details decided at the December meeting depending on weather etc. Leader R. Piesse

Fri. Feb. 13 *AGM* Election of Officebearers and Committee. Followed by *Local Geology* with Clive Willman. UCA hall, 8pm.

2003 Committee - C. Morris (President) ph. 9885 4221, J. Turnbull (VP and Grievance Officer) ph. 5474 3035, G. Broadway (Secretary) ph. 5472 2513, H. van Gemert (Treasurer) ph. 5472 1082, E. Perkins, R Mills (Newsletter Ed & Public Officer), G. Harris (Ass't Newsletter Editor), B. Maund, M. Oliver, R. Piesse and J. Cole.

Subscriptions for 2003

Ordinary membership: Single \$22, Family \$30

Pensioner or student: Single \$19, Family \$24

The subscription includes postage of the *Castlemaine Naturalist*.

Articles Welcome - Articles, reports and observations can be left with Jill at Tonks Bros., Barkers Street, Castlemaine or sent to P.O.Box 324, Castlemaine, 3450. Articles need to be submitted by the 4th Thursday of the month.

Disclaimer - The opinions expressed in this newsletter are those of the contributors and not necessarily those of the Club.

Castlemaine Field Naturalists Club,

PO Box 324,

Castlemaine.

Incorporation #A0003010B
